

State of Washington Decision Package

Agency: 310 Department of Corrections
Decision Package Code/Title: PA Corrections Recruitment and Retention

Budget Period: 2007-2009

Budget Level: PL – Policy Level

Recommendation Summary Text: The Department requests funding to implement statewide efforts for recruitment and retention to achieve an available workforce that provides vital custody and security duties in the Department's institutions.

Agency Total

| <u>Fiscal Detail</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Operating Expenditures | | | |
| 001-1 - General Fund - Basic Account-State | \$643,000 | \$465,000 | \$1,108,000 |

| <u>Staffing</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> | <u>Annual Average</u> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| FTEs | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |

Program 100-Administration and Program Support

| <u>Fiscal Detail</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Operating Expenditures | | | |
| 001-1 - General Fund - Basic Account-State | \$643,000 | \$465,000 | \$1,108,000 |

| <u>Staffing</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> | <u>Annual Average</u> |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| FTEs | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |

Package Description

Overview:

Working in an unpredictable and potentially hazardous environment, Corrections and Custody Officers are responsible for the safety and security of correctional institutions, offenders, staff, and the public, 24 hours/7days a week. The ability of the Department to attract and retain qualified staff to provide the needed security has continues to be challenging. Additionally, the Department is preparing for increased staffing at the Washington State Penitentiary expansion, which is scheduled to open August 1, 2007 and expansion of Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, which is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2008.

Recruitment Issues:

The Department created an in-training classification, Corrections and Custody Officer 1, (formerly Correctional Officer 1), which was adopted in May 1996. To enhance efforts towards producing highly qualified, well trained personnel, the Department developed a 12-month on-the-job training program, entitled: COACH. Upon successful completion of all COACH requirements, a Corrections and Custody Officer 1 is promoted to Corrections and Custody Officer 2. Over the past 10 years, the Department's COACH program has been successful and has resulted in highly trained and competent staff. The Department utilizes the Corrections and Custody Officer 1 register to fill positions at this level. The register is open on a "continuous" basis, due to the constant demand for applicants to fill permanent and on-call (intermittent) positions.

In order to attract candidates and increase the applicant pool, the Department 'partnered' with the Department of Personnel in the revision and simplification of the testing method for this class. This resulted in utilization of to a "Part 9" examination process, effective June 1, 2001. Subsequently, the register and testing process was transitioned to INET - an on-line application and examination procedure. An on-line application and examination was also eventually developed to support and enhance the Department's Corrections and Custody Officer 2 and Corrections and Custody Officer 3 (Correctional Sergeant) recruitment efforts.

In addition, the Department implemented a structured applicant screening and selection process to fill Corrections and Custody Officer 1 positions. This screening consists of:

- Criminal Background Investigation – includes: Federal Bureau of Investigations National Crime Information Center level III clearance with submission of fingerprints, Interviews with previous employers and references.
- Oral Board – where tenured corrections professionals ask a battery of questions to determine the applicants ability to respond spontaneously (think on their feet) and make rational, logical decisions.
- Reference checking - contact previous employers to gain insight regarding work habits and learn additional information about the applicant
- Physical Abilities Testing (PAT) – designed to ensure a minimal level of physical ability so applicants' posses the physical stamina and conditioning to participate in physical forces training and on-the-job application of physical force techniques with aggressive adult felons.
- Pre-Employment Drug Screening – applicants are required to test drug free.
- Psychological Testing – includes a battery of psychological tests concluding with an interview with a licensed psychologist.

The purpose of this structured applicant screening and selection process is to obtain relevant information about each candidate in order to make an informed decision about the candidate's potential to be successful as a Corrections and Custody Officer. (It is not the Department's intent to utilize this process to 'disqualify' (screen out) applicants during this recruitment phase of the hiring process. It is used to determine a candidate's potential and aptitude for Corrections and Custody officer work.) The Department also uses includes "desirable qualifications" in our recruitment process in order to broaden our recruitment base. An applicant must posses a valid driver's license.

The register for Corrections and Custody Officer 1 contains a large number of candidates. However, due to working conditions (i.e., working directly with offenders in a potentially hazardous environment), physical fitness standards, remote locations of some of our facilities, competition with cities and counties who pay a higher salary level than the state, the decreasing labor market, etc., the Department is continually recruiting/testing/screening for the Corrections and Custody Officer 1 level.

The Corrections and Custody Officer 1 register is used to fill not only permanent positions, but also on-call (intermittent) positions. Because of recruitment difficulties, the Department is experiencing a general lack of qualified candidates. As an example, Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC) recently completed the hiring process to fill on-call positions. Approximately 30 applicants were contacted. Of these 30 applicants, eight expressed interest in employment and were scheduled to participate in the hiring process. Four out of the eight showed up. These four successfully completed the Physical Ability Testing and were given conditional job offers. Of these four, two failed the drug screening. The remaining two proceeded to the final portions of the hiring process. As this example illustrates, it is a time consuming process to ultimately appoint two or three qualified candidates. This example is not unique to CBCC.

Institutions must fill posts that have been identified as “mandatory. A mandatory post is determined by facility, shift and post, and is based on the custody level of a facility, the custody level of inmates, and physical plant/operation concerns. In accordance with the Department’s staffing model, nearly all custody posts are mandatory and, therefore, are to be filled at all times. When permanent staff are absent and staff are not available to fill the mandatory post, or the institution does not have an adequate number of intermittent (on-call) staff to provide necessary coverage; management may be required to assign mandatory overtime. Mandatory overtime not only impacts an institution’s budget, but also affects the morale and life/work balance of the Department’s most valuable resource – staff. The Department’s recruiting difficulties have seriously, and detrimentally, affected our ability to fill, both, permanent and intermittent (on-call) positions and provide needed coverage for absences.

The Department must improve upon the success in retaining custody staff. Staffs who supervise inmates on a daily basis perform admirably in an often difficult and sometimes thankless job. The Department’s need for qualified custody staff is ongoing, and due to public safety issues, continues to grow. The mission at the Department of Corrections is to create environments in which all offenders learn to make choices that contribute to a safer society. This would be impossible without the dedicated work of custody staff.

The Department is therefore requesting funding for the Recruitment Plan to address the challenges to attract candidates and increase the applicant pool (\$1,108,000 Biennium).

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

How contributes to strategic plan:

This request is critical to agency activities, the strategic plan, and statewide results. The request ensures that the Department has the necessary resources to maintain current levels of service and performance.

This request is required to sustain the agency activities *Confine Convicted Adults in State Prisons and Core Administration*. The resources identified will be directed to support the agency objectives increase retention of qualified and competent staff. The strategy is to make increase retention of qualified and competent staff. These objectives and strategies move the Department closer to meeting its high-level organizational goals of increase recruitment and retention of diverse, qualified, competent, and valued staff. These high-level goals are intermediate outcomes and assist the Department in achieve statewide results that will reduce re-offense behavior and improve the safety of people and property.

Performance Measure Detail

| Activity A001 | Confine Convicted Adults in State Prisons | Incremental Changes | |
|------------------|---|---------------------|----------------|
| | | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> |
| Outcome Measures | | | |
| | Reduce employee turnover rates | TBD | TBD |
| | Reduce custody staff overtime hours | TBD | TBD |

Reason for change:

The Department must improve upon our success in retaining custody staff. Staffs who supervise offenders on a daily basis perform admirably in an often difficult and sometimes thankless job. The Department's need for qualified custody staff is ongoing, and due to public safety issues, continues to grow. The Department of Corrections mission is to create environments in which all offenders learn to make choices that contribute to a safer society. The Department would not be able to achieve this goal without the dedicated work of custody staff. The Department's request will provide resources to recruit highly qualified applicant pools.

Impact on clients and services:

Trained correctional workers are critical in responding to the increasing challenges in managing adult offenders. Turnover in custody staff creates gaps in services, Consistency is vital to ensure appropriate response to aggressive offender behaviors. Safety is paramount. This was demonstrated with the lockdown that occurred for several weeks at the Washington State Penitentiary, during the Spring of 2006.

Working in a prison is not a highly attractive or sought-after job. Applicants are not drawn to the Department to become a Corrections and Custody Officers. Working in a prison, where the potential of being assaulted is a reality, seriously impacts the Department's ability to recruit and retain staff. Mandatory overtime, working weekends, night shifts, working in remote locations and many other undesirable aspects of this type of work, also affects the Department's ability to hire and retain staff.

Impact on other state programs:

N/A

Relationship to capital budget:

N/A

Required changes to existing RCW, WAC, contract, or plan:

N/A

Alternatives explored by agency:

Incentives such as recognition pay (per OFM rules) for staff who refer viable candidates, payment of moving expenses and lump sum relocation compensation are currently being considered. Alternatives to prison and a focus on offender re-entry strategies may relieve some of the future staffing pressures. Also, developing a response to the recent employee survey that provides greater appreciation for the great work our staff do may also provide a positive impact on retention. In addition, developing recruitment tools that promote corrections as viable career choice is important to and can help to dispel the myth that there are no advancement opportunities.

Budget impacts in future biennia:

The Department's requested funding would continue into future biennia.

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs:

The Department's requested funding includes \$78,000 of one-time start-up supplies. All other costs are on-going.

Effects of non-funding:

Not funding this initiative will lead to a staffing crisis resulting in unstable working conditions and facility violence. Not funding this initiative will continue the high rate of unscheduled leave usage, which is a factor in the high rate of mandatory overtime that is required to maintain mandatory staffing in prison facilities. The overtime factor is harmful to family relationships and the well-being of staff. The Department will be forced to move staffing resources towards the most critical custody posts for day to day operations, which means discontinuing offender programming.

The Department will continue to strive towards reducing recidivism within current resources, however with increasing populations and limited funds to invest into reentry services the Department will lose ground in impacting an offender's re-offense behavior.

Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions:

Recruitment Plan to address the challenges to attract candidates and increase the applicant pool (\$1.1 million for the Biennium).

| <u>Object Detail</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> | <u>FY 2009</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| A Salary | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$200,000 |
| B Benefits | \$31,000 | \$31,000 | \$62,000 |
| E Goods and Services | \$502,000 | \$324,000 | \$827,000 |
| G Travel | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$20,000 |
| Total | \$643,000 | \$465,000 | \$1,108,000 |